

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 03309 191501Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 3309

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, GR, TU, CY, US
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS

REF: (A) ATHENS 3266 (NOTAL) (B) ATHENS 3174

1. AFTER READING THE TEXT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY TO THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER AND PROMISING THAT IT WOULD BE TRANSMITTED IMMEDIATELY, I COMMENTED THAT WE CONTINUE TO HOPE THAT GREECE WOULD NOT LOOK UPON OUR DECISIONS AS CONTRARY TO ITS INTERESTS. CARAMANLIS REPLIED THAT HE DID NOT REGARD OUR ACTIONS AS INTENTIONALLY ANTI-GREEK SO MUCH AS HE WAS CONVINCED THEY WOULD NOT OBTAIN THE RESULTS WE DESIRED AND WOULD FURTHER AGGRAVATE GREECE'S RELATIONS WITH TURKEY. WITH THIS HE WENT ON AT SOME LENGTH TO CHARGE THAT TURKEY'S PROPOSALS ON CYPRUS WERE UNWORTHY OF ANY U.S. SUPPORT AND, ABOVE ALL, INADEQUATE TO JUSTIFY CONGRESSIONAL ACTION TO LIFT THE EMBARGO. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE GOG HAD NOT SEEN THE TEXT OF THE PROPOSALS BUT DREW HIS CONCLUSIONS FROM THE EXPLANATORY NOTE ISSUED PUBLICLY BY TURKEY. BASED ON THAT, HOWEVER, HE HAD DETERMINED THAT NOTHING WOULD BE OFFERED THAT WENT BEYOND EARLIER OFFERS FROM ANKARA WHICH REPRESENTED NEITHER SERIOUSNESS OF INTENTION NOR INTEREST IN A
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FAIR NEGOTIATION. THE GOT'S AIM, HE ASSERTED, IS UNENCUMBERED "PARTITION" OF CYPRUS. BY OUR DECISION TO SEEK RELIEF FOR TURKEY ON ARMS SUPPLIES WE WERE CONTRIBUTING UNWISELY, EVEN IF UNWITTINGLY, TO TURKISH THIRST FOR "EXPANSIONISM." THE CONSEQUENCES OF ALL OF THIS, HE CONTENTED, WOULD BE TO CREATE SERIOUS DETERIORATION IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND JEOPARDIZE HIS EFFORTS TO FURTHER INTEGRATE GREECE INTO THE WEST.

2. DISPLAYING VISIBLE AGITATION, HE WENT ON TO ARGUE THAT HE KNEW THE TURKISH MENTALITY BETTER THAN WE DID -- "WASHINGTON IS FAR REMOVED FROM THIS AREA" -- AND THAT WE HAD BEEN MISLED BY THEIR DECEIT AND CUNNING. WITH THE BEST OF INTENTIONS WE WERE AIDING AND ABETTING TURKISH TRECHERY BY NEGLECTING TO EXTRACT COMMITMENTS THAT WOULD PROVIDE A FAIR BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION ON CYPRUS BEFORE ARRIVING AT OUR OWN DECISIONS. ANY NOTION, THEREFORE, THAT ANKARA HAS AN INCENTIVE TO SETTLE FOR WHAT IS EQUITABLE -- EVEN THOUGH IT WOULD BE MORE THAN THE STATUS QUO ANTE -- WAS NAIVE OF US AND AN INSULT TO OUR INTENTIONS. DWELLING FURTHER ON TURKISH INSINCERITY AND CONTEMPT FOR OTHERS, INCLUDING THE U.S., CARAMANLIS QUOTED ECEVIT AS HAVING SAID SOMEWHERE THAT "WHEN TURKEY WAS AN EMPIRE, AMERICANS WERE LIVING IN TREES."

3. AT ANOTHER POINT CARAMANLIS DECLARED THAT AS A GUARANTOR POWER, GREECE HAD THE RIGHT TO COMMIT THE SAME MILITARY ACTION ON CYPRUS AS TURKEY DID IN 1974. FURTHER, IF GREECE WERE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO PROVOKE TURKEY IT COULD PROCLAIM A 12-MILE TERRITORIAL SEA IN THE AEGEAN. HE DID NOT SAY THAT THIS WAS HIS INTENTION BUT THAT THESE WERE ACTIONS THAT GREECE POSSESSED THE RIGHT TO UNDERTAKE. HE CONTINUED TO PROTEST THAT TURKEY HAD NO SERIOUS INTENTION OF WORKING FOR A FAIR SETTLEMENT OF CYPRUS AND THAT WE WERE BLIND NOT TO RECOGNIZE THAT.

4. JUDGING THAT IT WAS NO OCCASION IN WHICH TO TRY TO SCORE DE-CONFIDENTIAL

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BATING POINTS I CONFINED MY RESPONSE TO SIMPLY URGING THAT IT WOULD BE IN EVERYONE'S INTEREST TO GIVE THE PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE UN A CHANCE TO WORK. THE FACT THAT SYG WALDHEIM WAS GOING TO NICOSIA TODAY ARGUED FOR SOME PATIENCE AND DEMONSTRATED THAT ULTIMATE CONCLUSIONS HAD NOT YET BEEN DRAWN. IT SEEMED A MATTER OF SELF INTEREST FOR ALL CONCERNED TO HOPE THAT A BASIS FOR RESUMING INTERCOMMUNAL NEGOTIATIONS MAY STILL BE WITHIN REACH.

5. COMMENT: IN CONTRAST TO MY EARLIER MEETING (REFTEL B), CARAMANLIS PROVOKED HIMSELF ANGRILY THIS TIME. ODDLY ENOUGH, THE TONE OF HIS REMARKS WAS MUCH MORE STRIDENT THAN THE TEXT OF THE LETTER AND THE TEXT OF A PUBLIC STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO HIM AND ISSUED BY THE GOVERNMENT (SEPTTEL) SEVERAL HOURS AFTER OUR MEETING. WHILE I UNDERSTAND THAT INTEMPERATE BEHAVIOR IS NOT UNCHARACTERISTIC OF HIM, HE IS RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY WORRIED ABOUT THE PERIOD AHEAD. ON THE DARKEST SIDE HE SEES THE COMBINATION OF A MEAN AND CONTEMPTIBLE TURKEY AND AN IRRESPONSIBLE GREEK POLITICAL OPPOSITION FEEDING OFF ANKARA'S INTRANSIGENCE AS RENDERING LIFE NEARLY INTOLERABLE FOR HIM. HE NEEDS SOME BUCKING UP WHICH I THINK MAY BEST BE OBTAINED FROM A MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT WHEN HE IS IN WASHINGTON NEXT MONTH. MCCLOSKEY

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